The Marker Lamp

Volume 50 Number 4 Fall 2004

Durango and Silverton morning train steams into Rockwood pulled by #482
Photo by Chuck Lind, MMR

Make Plans to attend the Lone Star Region Convention in Fort Worth Next June!

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The Marker Lamp

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National Model
Railroad Association

Volume 50, Number 4

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The editorial policy of **The Marker Lamp**, the official publication of **The Lone Star Region**, shall be to contribute, wherever possible, to the promotion, growth and understanding of the hobby of Model Railroading, within the confines of good taste and responsibility.

The Marker Lamp is published once each quarter by and for the members of **The Lone Star Region** of **The National Model Railroad Association**.

Articles appearing in **The Marker Lamp** are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the officers or membership of **The Lone Star Region** or **The National Model Railroad Association**.

Address all correspondence, news, photos and drawings to the editor. All material will be gladly accepted and will be used depending on the availability of space and suitability of material. None will be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided.

Correspondence relating to Pike Ads, Dealer Ads, Address Changes and requests for extra copies should be addressed to **Elbert Smith 518 Granada Drive, Garland, Texas 75043-5118. (972) 681-0117**

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President's Message

by Jim Packer, MMR

By now, most of the leaves have fallen off the trees and that time of the year has arrived when we think more of inside activities. This is the perfect time to get out of the armchair mode of modeling and get busy on a real project. We all tend to work on our layouts in cycles, depending on the weather, and as I write this, a clap of thunder outside reminds me that the Nevadun Railroad is calling me into action.

Another call to action takes form as we look forward to the spring elections. The LSR will be looking for candidates for President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Division Director for Divisions 1, 3, 5, and 7. Although the deadline for putting names on the ballot is not until March 1, now is a good time to start considering your willingness to serve. The Lone Star Region needs your help.

In addition, we will be voting on amendments to the LSR Constitution to bring us in line with the new NMRA Regulations (the Long Range Plan). As a point of clarification, the minutes that appeared in the last issue of *The Marker Lamp* of the LSR board meeting held last summer mentioned that several items amending the Constitution would be placed on the next ballot for approval. Most of those items were amendments to the LSR By-Laws and have already gone into effect. They do not require a membership vote. Amendments to the Constitution require membership ratification, while amendments to the By-Laws can be accomplished by the Board of Directors. There will be a number of constitutional issues that will need your approval. While some of those items have already been considered, many will be discussed at the LSR Mid-Year Board of Directors meeting in Fort Worth in January, and will also appear on the ballot next spring.

I received an e-mail the other day from "Pop" Loeffler's grandson. As you may know, "Pop" was an active member of the LSR many years ago, and his memory has been honored with the annual presentation of the "Pop" Loeffler Service Award. His grandson, Dr. Paul Loeffler, reports that after the recent passage of his father, the grandsons are faced with the unenviable task of disposing of their grandfather's mostly intact layout, old kits, brass locomotives, rolling stock, structures, and 50 years of *Model Railroader* magazines. There are also crates full of non-HO antique train stuff that he estimates came from Pop's more youthful days. Some of it could be quite valuable. Dr. Loeffler is seeking help in determining what to do with all of this. If any of you has any interest or suggestions that might help him in this process, let me know and I will put you in contact with him.

This brings up an issue that we all need to think about. Have you left your family any guidance as to what they should do with your prized railroading possessions after you are gone? As much as we don't like to think about that side of the future, it might be something that you should give some thought. It is hard to imagine a 1000-hour project ending up in the city dump because no one knew what to do with it, but I'm sure no one values your models as much as you do. My son says he will keep the layout for a couple of years, in deference to my memory, and then he will "make a shooting gallery out of it!" How's that for no respect? I just hope he is kidding.

The summer issue of *The Marker Lamp* was prepared on time and sent to the printer on time. The printer did his job quickly and the issues were ready for distribution in a timely manner. Unfortunately, some of you reported that you didn't receive your copy in the mail until nearly 4 weeks after the printer delivered the finished job, giving the term "snail mail" a whole new meaning. This is an unacceptable problem that we will be addressing. Fortunately, with *The Marker Lamp* now appearing on the LSR website, you have access to the latest issue before the mailman gets around to delivering the paper copy, but we cannot be satisfied with a distribution system that takes a month, when it shouldn't take more than 3-4 days. If you haven't viewed *The Marker Lamp* on the website yet, check it out. I think you will be impressed with the job Chuck Lind and Duane Richardson are doing. Frankly, we don't know right now what part of the process caused the delay, but we will be seeking answers and solutions.

One final reminder-***model railroading is fun!*** It is definitely more fun to participate than to just sit and read about it. The best time to get started on you next project is **RIGHT NOW!**

View from the Spar Pole

By Chuck Lind, MMR

As Jim said summer is over, the convention or conventions are all history now. I attended two conventions and my travel log is elsewhere in this newsletter. The one thing the conventions do for me is recharge my creative batteries. I get ideas from each and every layout I visit and closely examine each model in the contest room. When I attend a clinic my goal is to leave with at least one good idea that I can take home and try. I will admit when I try some of the ideas they don't work as well for me as they did for others, but that is part of trying and not getting in a rut with our model building. Most of you know I am a Narrow Gauger and a logging modeler on top of that, so I am always looking for the strange and unusual piece of rolling stock to build and I get many of my ideas by attending conventions and looking in the bone yards of railroads and railroad museums. While at Roaring Camp and Big Trees I spotted a small Steam-powered vertical boiler track speeder. About 10 photos later it is now in my idea file that I keep next to my workbench.

I know that many of you attended conventions and went to railroad-related spots on your vacation. Take a few moments to jot them down and submit them to the *Marker Lamp*. I am always looking for articles and you can earn points toward the AP Program.

So now that the summer is over and the lawn has stopped taking your time, get back to the workbench and put some of those projects back on the front burner and have something ready to enter in the contest room next year in Dallas.

Editor's note, Charlie Flichman is a fellow modeler and friend I meet when I lived in North Carolina. He has written articles on the Achievement Program and I felt they should be shared with modelers in the Lone Star Region. In his articles you will see MER which means Mid East Region and the Local which is thier Region Newsletter.

Achievement Program
Part One

by Charlie Flichman

Model Railroading is FUN! Are you having fun yet? If you are reading this, you already know that just belonging to the NMRA and the MER has increased your FUN and knowledge of the hobby of Model Railroading. But to a large number of our members, there is a way to further your horizons and have more FUN. That is to participate in the Achievement Program (AP)! OK, I hear the "Oh, that again.". BUT, it doesn't take any more than what most of you are already doing! In the next few LOCAL's, I will be attempting to spur some more of our members to participate in the AP.

You may ask "Who is he to be writing these articles?." Well, I volunteered to do it, BUT, I am also a participant in the AP. To date I have certificates in Civil, Electrical, Volunteer and Author. My paperwork is completed for Cars, and I need to finish one structure and the required area for Scenery to complete the requirements for MMR. I like to think of myself as an example of the people I am trying to reach. I joined both the NMRA and MER in 1965 and participated in many activities, even being on the 1978 MER convention committee and helped the folks who started the Mount Clare Division (Baltimore, MD). I moved to NC in 1984, served on the 1987 MER convention committee. But, being an O and On3 modeler, I dropped out in 1988. Some NC friends got me to rejoin in 1994 and I am now a LIFE member of both organizations. When I rejoined, I said to myself "Let's participate more and see what I can do in the AP". So here I am.

AP - Part 1

A good starting point in the Achievement Program is that of the **Gold Spike Award** . It's requirements are as follows:

1.) Display six (6) units of rolling stock.
2.) Construct a minimum of eight (8) square feet of layout.
3.) Construct five (5) structures.
4.) Install three (3) types of trackage properly (ballasted and on roadbed).
5.) Wire the installed trackage for simultaneous two train operation.
6.) Provide one additional electrical feature such as powered turnouts, etc.

That's all that is required and you will have the Gold Spike Award! Go to the NMRA website at www.nmra.org/achievement/gold to get all of the details. If you don't have web access, contact Al Boos, MMR (address on page 2) for the same information.

You are doing the modeling. Get some recognition for it. Contact your local division AP chairperson to have them assess your modeling or if you aren't in a division contact Al Boos and he will provide someone to assess your modeling.

In future issues of the *Marker Lamp*, we will look at the various categories of the AP itself. I hope these articles will motivate more LSR modelers to get into the program. It really is FUN!

For Immediate Release

Champaign, Illinois

Horizon Hobby, Inc. is pleased to announce it has signed a multi-year licensing agreement with Union Pacific for Athearn Trains. Union Pacific has further withdrawn the complaint it filed against Athearn in the United States District Court.

Tom Geddes, president of the Athearn division, stated, "Formalizing our relationship with Union Pacific is the first step in what is sure to be a long and productive relationship. We know that Union Pacific road names are critical to many modelers and are pleased we will be able to continue providing high-quality.

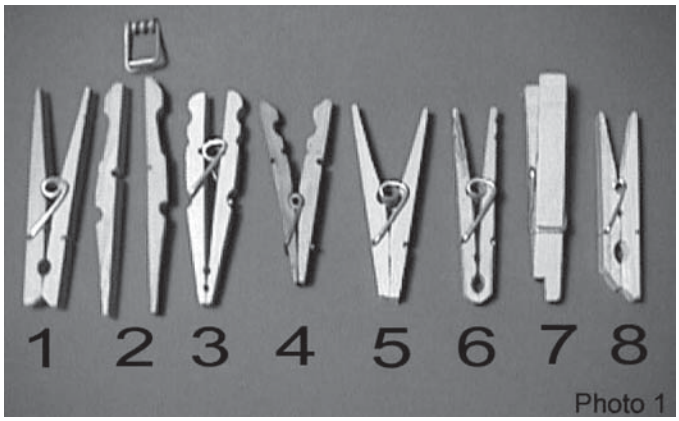
That's it for today
The Folks at Athearn

CLOTHESPINS: A GOOD CHEAP CLAMP

BY MMR's TRACY and TERRY MITCHELL

My brother and I are very strong advocates of using clamps to hold glue joints together, or would that be *ADVOCATES OF VERY STRONG CLAMPS*? No I think the first is correct. Anyway, to hold glue joints together there needs to be pressure while the glue sets.

There are several types of clamps that we use. One of our favorites to use are clothes pins. It might have something to do with how cheap they are. For a couple of bucks you can buy a bagful of them. Because they are so cheap, we have no qualms about modifying them to improve their suitability. Throughout the article we'll refer to the pictures with the numbers. **Clothespin Number 1 in photo number 1** shows one that hasn't been modified.



When you disassemble the clothes pin you are left with three pieces. **See Number 2.**

Number 3 shows one of our favorites. It's been reassembled with the flat sides together with the spring turned around. Rebuilt this way, the pin has a bit more clamping strength, and a bit more reach.

By repositioning the spring backwards you change the tension of the spring. This gives you more control of what you need to clamp. **Number 4 shows how this looks**.

Number 5 has the ends sawn flat across the front. This lets the pin get in close and tight to the parts you are trying to clamp.

Rounding the nose of the clothes pin as in **Number 6** allows you to hold small pieces while you are sanding or filing them, especially with power tools like a Dremel or a sander. Imagine trying to hold a tiny piece in your fingers. I would rather take a chunk out of a piece of wood, instead of my fingers.

Number 7 shows the nose cut narrower. This allows you to get into closer places to clamp.

Clothes pins make holding sandpaper easier than you can in many cases. First file the edge at an angle like in **Number 8**. Cut sandpaper in a narrow strip to fit the clothespin. Clamp the strip into the pin and wrap it around the pin. Hold the other end tight, and sand into tight places. With this method, you can sand without getting the rounding over of edges like your soft finger does while holding.

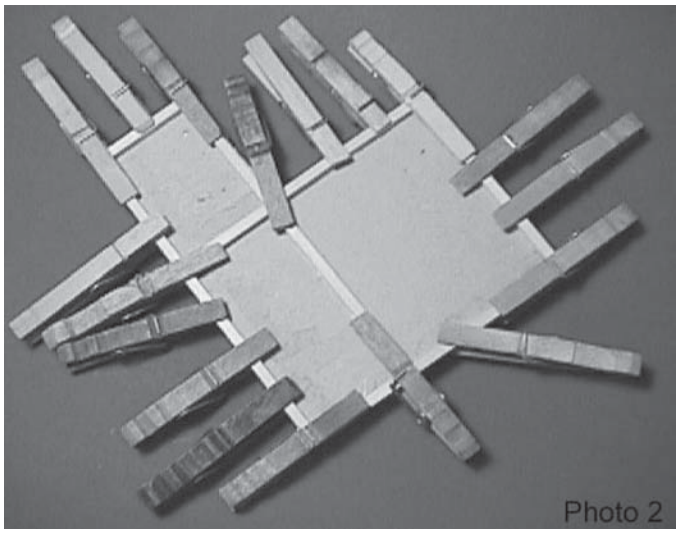


Photo 2 shows one of the most common ways to use clothes pins. We are clamping stripwood bracing to a cardstock wall.

As we said at the beginning, there are many different ways to clamp glue joints. Next time we will describe some of the other ways we clamp glue joints.

Back to modeling now
TNT

Railroad Vacation

by Chuck Lind, MMR

My wife Laurie and I decided to make the Narrow Gauge Convention in Santa Clara, California into a train-related vacation for us by driving and visiting some museums along the way. We left and drove to Abiline and on to Clovis where we followed along the BNSF mainline which runs between 50 - 80 trains daily. After an enjoyable morning of chasing trains we hit the Interstate and headed to Williams, Arizona on the old Route 66 and home of the Grand Canyon train. This town is a tourist town. They make the best of the railroad and Route 66. We had a dinner and made our way through several of the shops to see what they had to offer. We had decided not to ride the train on this trip so we were up early to visit the shops and get some photos of the steam train as it left on its trip to the rim of the Grand Canyon. From there it was on to visit friends is Las Vegas. I was able to see Brian Block's (had the sawmill diorama at the LSR) On3 layout along with a friend of Brian's HO/HOn3 layout. We did visit the strip and and old downtown to see the light show, but since I was on the way to the convention I limited myselt to about $3.00 gambling.

We left Vegas and headed toward Laws, California by way of Death Valley. Just before Death Valley we stopped and visited one of many ghost towns in the area. This town was unique in that it had a house known as the bottle house. It's walls were built using wiskey bottles, something a mining town had an abundance of. Quite a unique structure and well worth the stop. Then it was on across Death Valley. To someone from Texas one sign just didn't work for me, 32 feet below sea level, turn off your air conditioner next 15 miles. I looked at my truck's outside temperature readout and it said 115 degrees.

Laws is just North of Death Valley and is home to a nice SP Narrow Gauge museum. They have a well done railroad display with an engine and several different types of freight cars along with a gallows turntable and engine facilities. While all of this was great, what I really found interesting was the display of mining, railroad and construction equipment. Those early settlers were a creative lot. The items they could make from a Model T was astounding, gave new meaning to nothing went to waste.

From Laws we were headed to Tuolumne, home of the West Side Lumber Company. The most direct way was through Yosemite National Park. What a drive! We took our time and made several photo stops along the way. We visited and rode the 3' gauge railroad at Fish Camp where they have two of the remaining West Side Shays along with several pieces of equipment. The cars you ride on have the seats cut from a log and are West Side skelton cars. It was then on to Tuolumne and a long visit at the museum, to study their archives and look through lots of photos. The Indian's are building a casino on the old West Side property and a few of the buildings do remain. Jamestown was next on the agenda, the museum is at the Sierra Railroad shops, and where they filmed several movies and TV shows. We toured the roundhouse and shops taking detailed photos for future projects of both equipment and the Sierra Caboose that is in the process of being restored.

It was now time for the convention so we drove to Santa Clara to pick up our registration package and get some items entered into the contest room. Don't ever complain about the time it takes to enter an LSR contest, it took me over 2 hours to get 3 items entered. The layouts that were open for the convention were worth the trip on their own. Many of these have been in National publications such as Bob Brown's On3, Jim Vail's HO/HOn3, Dr. Miller's On3 and Jack Burgess' great HO Yosmite Valley, along with many others. There were more clinics than you could possible see and on almost any subject you could think of. One of the side trips for the convention was to Roaring Camp and Big Trees down on the coast. The name truly fits the stand of redwoods. It was something to see and when the train went into the woods, it went from sunshine to dark. They had all their operating steam, Shay, Climax and a Porter operating and performing run-bys for us. From there it was back to the convention site and one of many trips to the vendor room where I always spend more than I budget. The 4 days flew by and all too soon it was time to point the truck back to Texas.

On the way back we stopped to visit the Virginia & Truckee museum in Carson City, NV and then drove across what we feel was the most boring and useless piece of land in the United States as we made it across the Great Salt Lake. We stopped at the arches in southern Utah to take is some of the wonders of this country and then on to Durango. Durango was crowded since it was the last day of Harley Davidson bike week. When I took the roundhouse and yard tour, I was the only person on the tour so the one hour tour went to about two plus hours. We chased the morning trains up to Rockwood and then headed south to Chama. Quite a difference in Chama, not the large crowds or the commercialization of Durango. Time was spent walking the yard and checking on the progress of the steam locomotive rebuilding.

Sadly everything ends and work beckons so we turned the truck towards College Station. But after the LSR and the Narrow Gauge conventions I was refreshed and ready to go again. I have new ideas and my to-do list has many new items added to it. I have several new projects on the workbench that I am working on for the next conventions and by the way, I took a First, in diesel and Second place in geared locomotives at the National Narrow Gauge.

On page 7 you will see a sampling of the sites and layouts we saw on our trip. I was trying out my new digital camera and took over 1500 (I would be paying for the film and developing for years to come) photos of the sites and car details so I could come home and build some of these unique cars for my railroad.

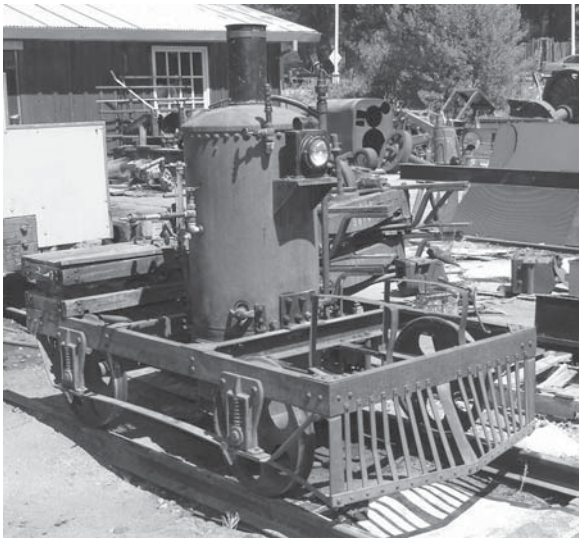
All photos on page 7 by Ckuck Lind, MMR

West Side Lumber Company Snow Plow at Fish Camp.

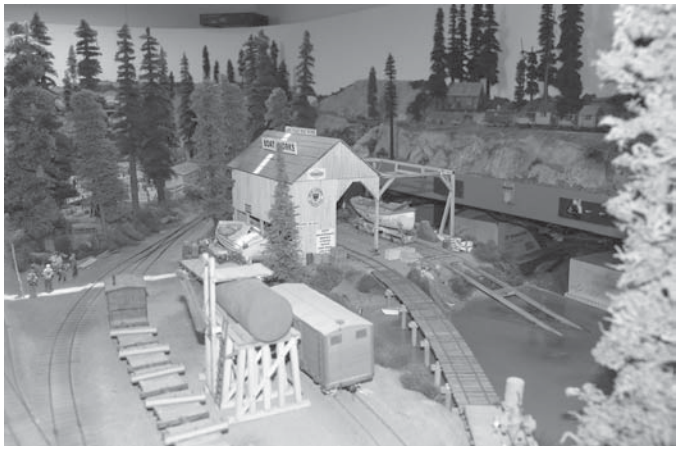
One of the tourist cars at Fish Camp made from a West Side Lumber Company skelton log car.

Jack Burges beautiful HO Yosmite Valley Railroad

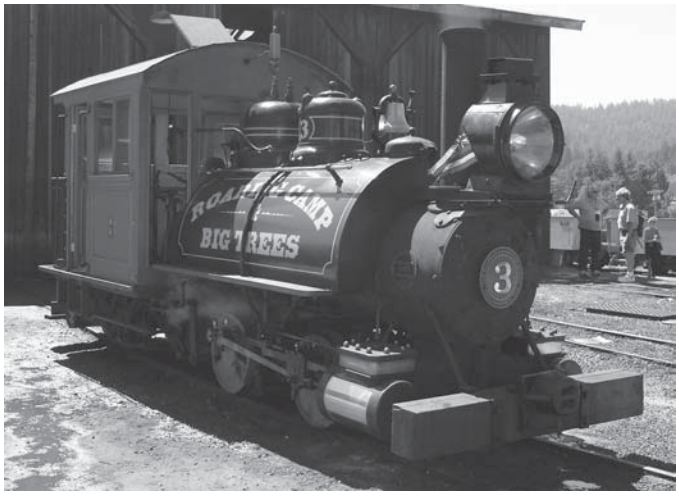
Rail car at the railroad museum at Jamestown, California. This is the site of the Sierra Railroad shops which still has most of the equipment used in the round-house along with many other pieces of equipment.



The find of the trip for me was this steam powered speeder in the back lot at Roaring Camp and Big Trees.



Bob Brown's great looking and well detailed On3 layout. Bob is the editor of the Narrow Gauge Gazette.



Porter steamed up and ready to work at Roaring Camp and Big Trees. They had their Climax and Shay also steamed up for the convention special.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report

By Elbert Smith

Correction to Minutes of Board Meeting:

The minutes of the June 2004 Board meeting printed in the last issue of the Marker Lamp listed four Board actions as proposed constitutional amendments to be on the ballot next spring. That was incorrect. The Board voted to submit one Constitutional amendment to the membership next spring. That one is: "No member's name may be placed on the ballot for more than one position as a Regional Officer or Director, with the exception that the offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined, if the candidate is willing to occupy both positions."

The other three Board actions actually were votes on amendments to the LSR by-laws. According to the LSR Constitution, the by-laws may be amended by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. The following three Board actions taken on the LSR by-laws now are in effect - (1) The addition of an Education committee and a description of the duties. - (2) The addition of a Web Page committee and a description of the duties. - (3) An additional duty of the Publication chair to forward a "suitable" copy of each Marker Lamp to the Web Page Chair for inclusion on the LSR web page.

LSR Financial Condition:

For the three months ending September 30, 2004.

Beginning Total Gen. Fund (July 1)		$6,705.48
Beginning Div. 1 Sub-Account		$425.62
Beginning LSR Gen. Fund Balance		$6,279.86
Income		
Ad, Dealer	$20.00	
Ad, Pike	16.00	
LSR Car Sales	545.25	
LSR Dues Rcvd. From NMRA	746.50	
LSR Dues Rcvd. From Members*	26.00	
NMRA Dues Received*	204.00	
Vanguard (CD Fund)	35.51	
Vanguard (Convention Fund)	25.21	
Vanguard (Life Fund)	25.23	
Subtotal		$1,643.70
Disbursements		
Cars, Shipping	46.24	
Convention Fund Deposit	508.64	
Division 1 Expenses	189.56	
Dues Overpayment Refunds	34.00	
LSR Dues Forward to NMRA*	20.00	
NMRA Dues Forward to NMRA*	204.00	
Marker Lamp Postage	303.25	
Marker Lamp Printing	565.88	
Sec.-Treas. Expense	110.78	
Trustee-Travel Expenses	250.00	
Web Site	49.50	
Subtotal		$2,281.85
Ending Total Gen. Fund		$6,067.33
Ending Div. 1Sub-Account		$236.06
Ending LSR Gen. Fund Balance		$5,831.27
Total Net Worth – All Accounts		**$39,598.53**

*Almost all LSR members join NMRA and LSR, by paying their dues, through NMRA Headquarters. We encourage that. Headquarters mails the membership cards and sends us the LSR dues. Dues payment checks made out to "LSR" that we receive directly from members are deposited in the LSR General Fund. Then, an LSR check for member dues is sent to the NMRA. Some NMRA members of other regions also join the LSR and they pay their LSR dues directly to us.

Life Members:

Two LSR members upgraded their memberships to Life Member status during the last quarter: Gil Freitag, MMR#91, of Houston, TX and Jack Eisenlohr of Round Rock, TX. Thank you, gentlemen.

The LSR Secretary/Treasurer can tell you your LSR Life Member cost, which is calculated according to your birth date. You also can contact the NMRA to find out your NMRA and/or your LSR Life Member costs. Mail and e-mail addresses are listed inside the front cover of the Marker Lamp.

LSR membership roll listed 685 members on October 1, 2004.

New Members:

Please welcome these new members and invite them into your Division's activities.

Aaron Poscovsky,	Houston, TX
David Shepherd,	Stephenville, TX
Jack McCullough,	Amarillo, TX
Robert Barker,	San Antonio, TX
Carol Blumentritt,	Houston, TX
Lewis Williams,	Ft. Worth, TX
Thomas Picton,	Baton Rouge, LA
Mark Randolph,	Jefferson, TX
Lyndell Moore,	Canyon, TX
John Bennett,	Garland, TX
John Emerson,	Amarillo, TX
Kenneth Currie,	Arlington, TX
Gerald Bolmer,	Austin, TX
Thomas Foreman,	Austin, TX
Rodney Fredericks,	Baton Rouge, LA
Rick Townsend,	Bellaire, LA
John Barteau,	Boerne, TX
Richard McCarthy,	Canyon Lake, TX
John Cobb,	Dallas, TX
Billy Langford,	Doyline, LA
Mark Wilson,	Flower Mound, TX
Clara Brown,	Fort Worth, TX
Bob Stephens,	Groves, TX
Bill Cowthon,	Houston, TX
Ellis Ray Jr.,	Houston, TX
Kelly Russell,	Houston, TX
Marc Truitt,	Houston, TX
Don Formanek,	Houston, TX
Benda Gailen,	Jacksonville, TX
James Krumm,	Lockhart, TX
Barbara Hartigan,	New Braunfels, TX
Bill Reid,	Pasadena, TX
Stephen Moore,	Plano, TX
Mark Fischner,	Porter, TX

Continued on Page 9

New members continued from page 8

Jack Siegel,	Randolph AFB, TX
Bruce Ruster,	Robstown, TX
Joseph Barnhart,	Royse City, TX
Gerhard Stubben,	Saint Hedwig, TX
Robert Barker,	San Antonio, TX
Paul Lawler,	San Antonio, TX
Orphie Neathery,	San Antonio, TX
John Talley,	San Antonio, TX
James Temple,	San Antonio, TX
David Shepherd,	Stephenville, TX
Trudy Mosher,	Sugar Land, TX
Gene Mangum,	Sugar Land, TX

FROM THE PAST (Summer 1979)

By Jim Long, MMR

The LSR 1979 Convention was held in New Orleans on June 22, 23, and 24. Allen McClelland gave a fantastic slide presentation that took you behind the scenes of his Virginian & Ohio railroad with a personal show.. Also, disguised as a mild-mannered Model Roader magazine Associate Editor, the infamous Andy Sperandeo returned to New Orleans. Andy joined MR in January of this year. It is rumored that he had never seen snow before and spent the first two weeks in Milwaukee looking for the sun! Russ Larson was finally able to coax a little work out of him by importing a DIXIE six-pack.

A report on the DORCHEAT AND LAKE BISTINEAU railroad under construction in Minden, Louisiana by owner Mose Crews. The D&LB has over 150 feet of main line and 8 major switching areas in a 12 X 12 foot space that is also shared with the Missouri Southern owned by Mose's son Skipper. The D&LB is built using flex track, commercial track, chewing gum, piano wire, and any other track that Mose could find (seems to be a track shortage in this area of Louisiana). One of the more impressive components if the D&LB is the custom painted and hand lettered locomotives and rolling stock. The entire name DORCHEAT AND LAKE BISTINEAU is spelled out with individual letters cut from decal sheets. The folks up Mindanao way hope that custom decals will appear shortly before Mose goes crazy and/or completely blind.

FROM THE PAST (Fall 1979)

By Jim Long, MMR

The new LSR President, Vernon Ball, reported that the attendance at the New Orleans LSR convention was down about 30% and was caused by the gas-crunch (only one filling station was open between New Orleans and Houston on Sunday). Vernon also reported that inflation has taken its toll of moderate priced hotel space.

During the annual business meeting the following list of officers had been elected:

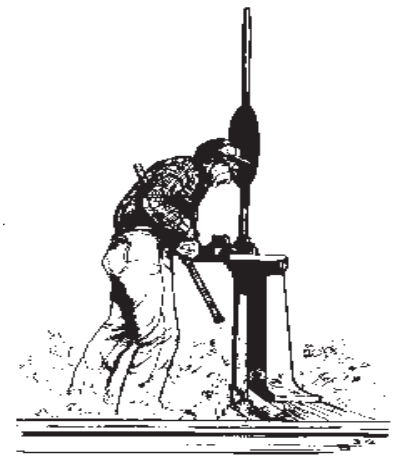
President,	Vernon Ball
Vice President,	John Lott
Secretary/treasurer,	Eunice Linda
Area I Director,	Terry Adams
Area II Director,	John Mead
At-Large-Directors,	Richard Kamm
	R.J. MacDonald
	Gary Zenger

Mile Hale, LSR Achievement Program Chairman awarded the following Achievement Certificates:

Ray Bracht, Jr.	Chief Dispatcher
Bill Wright	Master Builder, Cars
Bob Moore	Master Builder, Scenery
	Master Builder, Motive Power
	Model Railroad Engineer, Civil
	Model Railroad Author
John Lowrance	Association Official
Miles Hale	Association Volunteer
C.J. Durrenberger	Master Builder, Cars
	Chief Dispatcher
	Model Railroad Author

The following business was conducted during the LSR Annual Board Meeting in New Orleans: Dr. Kamm made a motion, seconded by Ben Pearlman, and passed by the board, that the 2 year trial period using a standard auction form not be continued and that the local auction committee use whatever form they choose. John Lott was appointed to chair the committee on area expansion. Ben Pearlman made a motion, seconded by Eunice Linda, and passed by the board, that a dues increase from $2 to $3 per year be placed on the next ballot.

Larry Redmond reported in the Marker Lamp that the PARALLAX RAILROAD kept its head above water. in the Houston flood of 1979. Larry reported that "we'll have problems enough with insurance adjusting on the furniture and the house without facing the losses which could have resulted on the railroad.



Cowcatcher Division 1

by Jim Howard

Several model railroading events have taken place in and around the Cowcatcher Division since the Gulf Coast Express. Most significant was the latest quarterly Division meeting in August with the largest turnout to date. The main agenda topic was LSR President Jim Packer's briefing on the NMRA Board of Trustees meeting in Seattle and the impending changes brought about by the passage of the Long Rang Plan. What Jim expected to be "a brief 15 minutes or so" turned into over an hour of serious discussion between members present. The biggest item of contention was NMRA's "single membership" policy and what effect it could have on the 2005 Cowtown Limited convention to be hosted by Division 1. Many NMRA members living in the 29 counties that make up Division 1 are not now members of the Region. Some members present felt that allowing them to participate in the convention might interest them in becoming active in Division activities, however President Packer stated there was no way that would be possible. Current planning is for the next Cowcatcher gathering to be held November 20 at the LMRA facility.

The Cowcatchers are very fortunate to have access to the Lockheed Martin Recreation Facility for meeting space thanks to LSR Director at Large and LMRA Railroad Club Commissioner Bob Bray. Each LMRA activity has a volunteer "Commissioner" who is responsible to see that the activity is "active". Bob's 21 year tenure as RR Commissioner is testimony to his dedication and enthusiasm for anything associated with trains. Under Bob's direction the model railroad activity has received the LMRA Certificate of Excellence award a total of 11 times, and individually, Bob has been awarded the LMRA Eugene Crossier award 4 times.

The Division was represented at the LMRA Train Show held 9/10 October. Tim Blackwell and I manned a table, handing out informational material promoting model railroading and the NMRA. Tim also provided samples of the Cowcatcher Roundup with the suggestion that LSR membership guarantees receipt of a personal copy each time it is printed. We will also both be working an LSR table at the upcoming North Texas Council of RR Clubs Holiday Train show 13 and 14 November. Check John Hawkins' Up The Track Column for more information about this train show.

Convention Chairman Bob Bray recently signed off on a contract with the Holiday Inn North to host the 2005 "Cowtown Limited". The convention is scheduled for June 2 through 5. Original plans for June 10 through 13 were derailed when the Texas Motor Speedway announced they would be having NASCAR Truck and IndyCar Series racing that weekend. Following that news release, hotel rates took an immediate upward climb. Contracted room rates for conventioneers will be $70 per night with complimentary breakfast included each registered day. Convention registration is expected to be $60, however, that may be affected by the cost for the Saturday banquet and Sunday breakfast. The hotel would not finalize those charges until a later date. Bob feels sure that he can get an agreement confirmation soon. Other convention planning such as clinics, layout visits, and extra fare programs is being assigned to committee representatives.

That's all the news from Cowtown at this time. Cooler weather is moving into area and that means no grass cutting, or garden tending, but time for railroading. I hope ya'll are as ready as I am. In the meantime, keepum on the rails.

Bayou Division 2

by Jack Green

October 7 & 8 saw the extravaganza GATS show come to Lamar-Dixon Expo Center in Gonzales, LA. For those filled with curiosity, Gonzales is a small town just south of Baton Rouge toward New Orleans. The folks at GATS informed me that they registered 6000 guest with 27 vendors and 4 operating layouts. They will return to Gonzales next summer. Art Houston's Grande Pacific modular HO was the largest display and a real show-stopper. Art always has a fine crew with him that push the Crescent Clubs Christmas open house in December. The modular layout is just a small part of the versatile Mr. Houston's vast repertoire; he maintains a large multilevel layout in a building behind his house and is also working with the Crescent lines and others on DCC. Another Bayou Division display regular was the Crescent City S Gaugers, with Jay Mellon (coordinator) This fine Modular system features a double track mainline in a 15'x30' area. The Digitrax DCC system is used to keep this layout alive and interesting for all the public to enjoy. The S Gaugers were in Pensacola a few months ago and thoroughly enjoyed meeting all the fans from that neck of the woods. I would hope the Texas folks could convince Jay and his crew to cross the Sabine River and share their layout with them.

Meet Bayou Division member Marvin Ackermann.

Marvin recently retired as Director of the Bayou Division, LSR. He had held this position for the past 14 years or so and has weathered the changes taking place not only within the Division, but also in the hobby itself. A Native of New Orleans, he currently lives in Metairie with his wife June and they have one grown child. His 56 years in the pursuit of model railroading has taken him to many spots around this great country of ours.

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His attendance at almost all the LSR conventions and many of the NMRA functions as well reflects his true dedication to the hobby.

His current position as President of the New Orleans Crescent City Model Railroad Club keeps him busy supervising and implementing the exciting and rewarding aspects that we are seeing these days on the market. The CCMRC is currently fine-tuning the operational capabilities of RailOp and they are doing studies and research for DCC use during the next year. The CCMRC is a member of the four-club hosting of Louisiana Rail Run that his held bi-annually.

Marvin is an active participant at Lou Schultz's C&O in Covington that is also a LRR host and holds large operating sessions every 6 weeks allowing 20 to 25 operators to hone their skills. Perhaps Marvin's most exciting pursuit is his collection of Private Carriers, which he numbers well into the multiple hundreds. If you have a car on your layout that he does not have, beware Marvin will strike a very hard bargain to relieve you of the prize.

The Midsouth is gearing up for another Louisiana Rail Run in October along with the Crescent, Lou Schultz's C&O and Jim Lofland's Tall Timbers and Santa Fe. There will be a group of regulars from Houston, Shreveport and DFW along with new visitors from Steve Barkley's Beaumont operations and Jim Clark's Lake Charles group. The expansion of our layout is moving along quite well and should be running by that date. The club members decided to host an experimental open house for the GATS show with limited advertisements in the MR, flyers at local hobby shops and at the show itself. We were pleased with the turnout and will probably open again for the GATS next summer.

That's all for now. I'll have more on the Fall Louisiana Rail Run in the next issue.

North East Texas Division 3

by Bill McPherson

It may not be the first thing that comes to mind when you think of the benefits of model railroading. However, one of the greatest things is **friendship.** As we pursue the material aspects of railroading, we often forge lasting friendships with a wide variety of individuals. Although we may come from totally different backgrounds and careers, we find common interests in modeling, running, watching, or talking about trains.

Another benefit is how railroaders come together to help each other. Untold amounts of time and effort are spent by authors writing helpful and interesting articles for publication and by clinicians at conventions and train meets. We railroaders get together to help build a new railroad or improve an existing one. During the past few months almost frantic efforts have been made to get the 19 railroads involved in the Dallas and Fort Worth operating interchange (entitled the DFW Interchange) ready for the 50 or more visitors coming from throughout the country in late October.

One of our recent preparatory operating sessions was on the excellent layout built by Jerry Hoverson in McKinney. Jerry has assistance from several friends in maintaining his large layout and during operating sessions. Again this demonstrates the importance of friendship among model railroaders.

While I was there, Jerry showed me 6 of the totally scratch-built cars he is completing for the Master Builder – Cars Achievement Award. When finished, they will really be impressive. Thus, Jerry is only a short time away from being the next Master Model Railroader in the LSR. Also in Division 3 Charlie Kirk and Duane Richardson have received their Scenery certificates. The paperwork has been submitted by Paul Richardson for Scenery and David Davis for Civil Engineering. Speaking of Paul, he has been out-of-state for many months but continues his Division 3 Achievement Chairman duties and other activities for the LSR.

That's all for now….see you down the tracks.

Cen-Tex Division 4

by Bob Alson, Jr.

We're heading into the busy season for working on the model railroad, so dust off the tools and get after it. I have been really jazzed about getting my signaling in on the Hewitt and Central Texas. About two months ago, I finally got my Digitrax block detector board and started the process. I'm currently, as of this writing, beginning the program writing and will hook up the signals soon thereafter. I'm using the C/MRI(Chubb) system due to its versatility and costs. I'll let you know how my choice comes out.

On other modeling fronts, I set up a booth at the Temple show in mid-Sept. and with the help of **John and Bradley Linda** managed to enlist a new member and to peddle about 6 division cars. **Eunice Linda** was proud of our efforts. The show had an average number of visitors and the vendors were wall to wall in the main hall. It really is a fun show to go to, but I'm quite partial. Another modeling event that will be taking place Oct. 30 in Austin is the Jamboree. It is perennially an excellent venue. **Tom Pearson** and crew have it all- vendors, clinics and a layout tour. Unfortunately, due to the logistics of Marker Lamp scheduling, you will have missed it by the time you get this. Not a problem, it's always held the last weekend in Oct. each year.

On a model railroading is fun note, I had the opportunity to travel to a foreign country, New Iberia, Louisiana, to help **Dick Schneider** install his Digitrax system. All went smoothly and it even worked- well… until the morning I was leaving to go home. It seems that I activated one of those hidden "features" by accident. After wracking our brains and the manuals we finally did the unmanly thing and called for help. Digitrax quickly got us back running and both of us breathed a sigh of relief. About a month later I had a chance to spend an afternoon operating on **Jack Merkel's** layout. It is a very enjoyable, low key, low pressure session. All eight of us that attended had a ball. Now this is what the fraternity of model railroading is all about. Let's each get out and invite some our buddies over to operate, run or work together on our layout. It really is more fun to share!

Division 5

by Ronald Kutch

Up here in Amarillo, members of the Amarillo Railroad Museum have been quite busy over the last few months. We have continued working on our building trying to get it ready for the City to issue the "occupancy" permit. Each week we get closer to our goal, but we still have a few more weeks worth of work to complete as of this writing. It has been going slow since the work is mainly being done by volunteers within our organization. When it is finished we will have our own building on our own property in which we can build our dream layout and model the Santa Fe transcontinental mainline from Canadian, Texas to Texico, New Mexico. Plans for the layout to be built in our building are underway. If anyone wants to keep up with our progress, you can visit our web site at www.amarillorailmuseum.com.

Concerning the "Madam Queen," Santa Fe engine #5000, nothing has happened yet. For anyone that may not be aware, after the Santa Fe Railroad retired their fleet of steam engines in the 1950's, engine #5000, the "Madam Queen," the prototype engine for the 2-10-4 Class of steam engines was donated to the City of Amarillo and was put on display in front of the Santa Fe Depot on a permanent easment granted to the City. During the 1980's, the Santa Fe sold the Depot and its surrounding property to private developers; the most recent owner of the Depot relocated his business to the Depot grounds and requested the City relocate the engine. Another organization, the Railroad Artifact Preservation Society (RAPS), was formed to take-up the cause of relocating the steam engine to a new site. The City bought a new piece of property approximately 2 blocks to the north and one block to the west of the Depot grounds. RAPS' plan is to ultimately put a building over the engine to protect it from the elements, but their immediate issue is the fundraising to put a foundation on the site to support the engine before it can be relocated. We will pass along news if/when anything happens.

Division 6

by Doyle Bond, MMR

I attended the New Braunfels Summer Train Show on August 21 and the Alamo Model Railroad Engineers (AMRE) Fall Train Show on October 2 and 3. At both shows I was recruiting people to join and re-join NMRA and LSR. At the AMRE show we held a model judging under NMRA standards. Since the judging was not planned far in advance, the only publicity was word-of-mouth. Even so, we had 6 entries of which 4 were Merit quality. One of the other entries was from a young lady that has great promise. The judges for the event were: Al Boos, MMR; Charlie Spangler, MMR; and myself.

I will attend the San Antonio Model Railroad Association (SAMRA) Jamboree on January 29 and 30; the New Braunfels Summer Show in August; and the AMRE Fall Show in October. At each of these events I will recruit for members for NMRA and LSR. Also at each event we will have a model judging contest with some prizes awarded. I am working with the New Braunfels Railroad Museum group to have space for me to recruit and to have a model judging contest, with prizes, at their April Jamboree.

Plans for the 2006 LSR Convention in San Antonio are progressing. The Chairperson for the event will be Gary Maitland. Al Boos has served as the convention chairperson for many years in the past will act in an advisory capacity. SAMRA has a number of members that have worked other conventions and train shows, so it will be a great convention. More information will be presented as it becomes available.

Clara Mae Marcotte, an excellent modeller from Kingsville, advised that she and her husband Ron, built a layout to put in the Conner Museum for the Kingsville Centennial in July. The layout depicted early Kingsville with ploughed fields of cabbages, etc. The Conner Museum is still exibiting the layout, so go see it when you make you next trip to Kingsville. Clara Mae furnished the following photo.

I was unable to attend the SAMRA Summer Show on August 7 and 8, but Jim Ladd, who is member of SanTrak, as well as SAMRA, NMRA, and LSR, wrote the following report about Division 6 activities. Thanks, Jim.

The Capitol Limited N-Scale Convention in Chantilly, VA has come and gone and I understand they had record crowds, a record layout and a good time was had by all. I wish that I could have been there but I, like many others, was unable to make the trip. However, we did have a train show in San Antonio, TX the 7th and 8th of August and we believe it turned out to be the biggest N-Scale layout ever assembled in South Texas except for Houston which has hosted several N-Scale conventions in the past.

Our show at Crossroads Mall was hosted by San Antonio Model Railroad Association, Inc. and our single, combined, N-Trak layout was made up of five clubs: SanTrak (San Antonio), AusTrak (Austin), Tex-N (Plano), Northwestern Crossing (Houston) and the New Braunfels Group.

The layout was 137 feet long and 26 feet wide at the widest point. We had four junction modules that permitted us to have three self-contained loops that were connected in the standard "spine" configuration. This, in turn, permitted us to run trains on the Red Line (outside track) around the entire layout. There were 33 modules that made up the spine and a total of 91 modules in the layout. After allowing for a couple of six foot modules, a few corner modules and a couple of inside corners we estimate the total travel around the layout was in excess of 370 actual feet.

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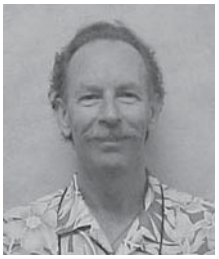
This configuration allowed the three self-contained loops to allow analog (DC) operation on the two inside tracks of each loop. However, there were no provisions for trains to travel from one loop to the other with analog power. The "Grand Tour" was reserved for DCC operation on the outside track of the layout and this is where the locomotive engineers got their exercise for the day! We used the Easy DCC system which is familiar with members fo SanTrak, AusTrak, and Tex-N, but it was a new experience for some of us to set up and operate a DCC loop as large as this one. Yes, we had a few problems to begin with, but the problems were resolved and the layout performed flawlessly during the rest of the show.

When we started the planning phase of our show we set our goals to; 1. Meet members of different clubs, 2. Learn new techniques from different members and 3. Just have fun during the process. I feel we achieved all three of our goals and that, after all, is what Model Railroading is all about. by: Jim Ladd, SanTrak, SAMRA, NMRA, LSR

That's all for now, I gotta go play with my trains, Doyle.



Division 7

by Don Kimmell

Hello from upper reaches of North Louisiana. We survived another typical summer…Hot and Humid, thank you Lord for air conditioning!!!

Actually there has not been very much organized activity going on around here. Dr Kamm is running the "Sue Lines" every week with a good sized crew. Most vacations are now over, and fall is here so train shows start again!!!

The Ark-La-Tex Bunch went down to Temple for their show and a good time was had by all. I went along and saw many faces from the region there, or at least some folks from Waco, San Antonio, Dallas and Houston. For a while I thought we might be having a Board meeting!!! But if you ever have the chance, you should go to this show, the "Centex" crew does a super job of putting on a show, and their open house is always fun. The next show for the modular club is the Lockheed Show next weekend, I will not be attending—first time in 6 years—but you must pay to play and this is one of those times.

The KCS "Holiday Express" improvement program is right on track—we are behind as usual!!! We have added a bit more animation and promptly blew the circuit breakers, seems we had a few too many amps on one side….back to basic electricity 101. We have added a ski lift, skating pond, Christmas tree lot, loading dock, dumping truck, bubbling oil tank, airport beacon, and a somewhat quirky bulldozer—it works when it wants to and that seems to be only when the right stars are out!!! I have attached the following schedule for this years "Holiday Express"…

Date	Time	Location	Address
27 Nov	4PM	Shreveport,	LaFestival Plaza (downtown)
28 Nov	5PM	LaPlace, La	Elm Street
29 Nov	5PM	Baton Rouge	1401 Floss St.
30 Nov	5PM	Pineville, La	Melrose Street
1 Dec	5PM	Leesville, La.	KCS Yard 901 S. 3rd St.
2 Dec	5PM	DeQuincy, La.	Railroad Museum 400 Lake Charles Avenue
3 Dec	5PM	Beaumont, Tx.	KCS Yard 4095 MLK Pkwy
4 Dec	5PM	Port Arthur, Tx.	Old KCS Depot Proctor & Houston
5 Dec	5PM	Vicksburg, Ms.	KCS Yard 2105 Levee Street

If anyone is interested in the rest of the schedule, it is posted on the KCS.org web site, - -they will be running until December 19th—ending at Union Station Kansas City, Mo. If anyone has any questions concerning the "holiday Express" feel free to call or e-mail me, and I will try to be of some help. For you Photo Hounds, the train makes for some super pictures, in the right light!! It does some running during daylight hours, so is available for pictures.

The enclosed picture is of yours truly last year standing on "my" sleeping car…Fun!!!!

Texas Gulf Division 8

by Jim Long, MMR

The September 11 Board of Foremen's meeting, most of the time was spent on the repercussions of the NMRA approving the long range plan. There has never been any information on how the Division will receive funding. The Division will have to mail the WAYBILL (Official Division Newsletter) to all the NMRA members residing in the Division. It cost the Division $1 for paper and postage for each copy of the WAYBILL. Current members of the Division pay $5 yearly dues to receive the WAYBILL.

Don Bozman gave a report in the LSR 2004 convention that was held in Houston.

The Division's Annual Meeting and Picnic was held on October 16 at Zube Park hosted by the Houston Area Live Steamers (HALS). A New set of officers was elected by acclamation at the annual meeting and are:

President:	Leslie Eaton, MMR
Vice President:	Bob Leeper
Secretary:	Ronnie Pendleton
Treasurer:	Peter Bryan

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During the business meeting, outgoing President, Don Threlkeld, gave a going out of office speech thanking everybody for helping him in making his 2 terms in office easier. Don also recalled some of the events the Division sponsored during this time (field trips to the Smithers Lake power plant, Forest Heritage Sawmill Museum, layout tours in Beaumont and Galveston, our annual meeting/picnics with HALS at Zube Park, and hosting the 2004 LSR Convention).

At this time he turned the reins of the Division over to Leslie Eaton, the new Division President. Leslie certainly got her term(s) off to a satisfactory start with all the attendees by saying she had nothing to say and would anybody make a motion to adjourn the meeting and LET'S EAT! The membership then feasted on BBQ beef and hot dogs and enjoyed the rest of the time in fellowship and riding the 11/2 inch scale trains operated by HALS.

Company Store

Cars that are available:

	HO		N-Scale
Casey Lines	$7.00		$10.00
Crescent City Lines	Out		$10.00
Texas & African	$7.00		$10.00
Waco Austin & Bryan	$7.00		$10.00
Anniversary Car 1951	$12.00	per set	$42.50
Anniversary Cars 2001	OUT	per set	$42.50
ITC	$13.00	per set	$42.50
John Lott	$16.00		$16.00
Quin Lines	$14.00		

Please add $4.00 for shipping

Check your layout and be sure you have one of each *special run* Region car. If not we can take care of the shortage post haste.

Eunice Linda, Dispatcher
3028 Cumberland
Waco, TX 76707-1219
254-754-5535
E-mail: jlinda@hot.rr.com

Up the Track

By John Hawkins

Please send any and all information about upcoming events or activities in your area to me via email at je.hawkins@comcast.net or via USPS to 1723 Shufords Court, Lewisville, TX 75067. I prefer to receive such information via e-mail, but I will accept it any way you want to send it. Now, here are some upcoming events. I would like to thank the *Cowcatcher Round Up* for several of the listings.

Houston, Texas Houston Area Live Steamers
Located in Zube Park on US 290 northwest of Houston. Open to the public every 3rd Saturday March through November from 10:00AM to 4:00 PM. Train rides are free. For LSR members, call or E-mail anytime for other special dates that you can attend. Contact Peter Bryan peterb@pdq.net or 713-939-8002

Katy, Texas Southwestern Live Steam Meet
November 12-14 Contact Earl Bean – bean2284@cox.net

Fort Worth, Texas:

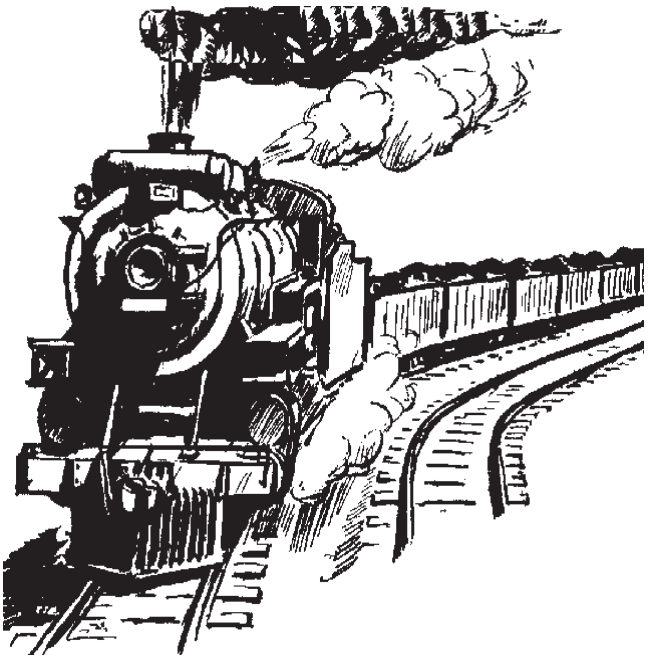
Fort Worth Holiday Train Show
November 13-14, 2004 Amon Carter Exhibits Building at the Will Rogers Memorial Center, 3401 West Lancaster, Fort Worth, TX. 76107. Saturday 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM; Sunday 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM Admission charge $7.00 per person, children 10 and under free. Additional information maybe obtained from Robert Bray, 1820 Spruce Lane, Benbrook, TX 76126, 817-249-4965 (6-10 pm CST) or e-mail to robert.l.bray@lmco.com.

CALL FOR CANDIDATES

The 2004 LSR convention had the best participation in several years. This was due to contested races. Let's continue to involve more participation in the election process.

The LSR will need to fill the following positions for 2005: President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, and Directors from Divisions 1, 3, 5, and 7. Requirements to run: LSR membership for one year prior to taking office and attendance at Board of Directors' meetings or written proxy.

Nominations must be received no later than March 1, 2005. Bio information sheets are available on the LSR website, or by mail from John C. Linda, Chairman, LSR Nominating Committee, 3028 Cumberland Avenue, Waco, TX 76707.



Building My First Model
Part 1 of 2

by Tom Browning

For my first model I wanted to build something with which I was personally familiar and that had special meaning to me. The memory of a recent visit to West Texas was still relatively fresh and that seemed to be a good subject to model. This was a catalyst to find out more about the area and to fill in little blanks and gaps in my memory of the area. West Texas is quite a large area, but the memory of the little town of Marathon, Texas was special.

Marathon, Texas is a small town about forty miles north of the entrance to Big Bend National Park out in West Texas. It is at the crossroads of east-west Highway 90 and north-south Highway 385 that is a gateway to Big Bend National Park. Approximately sixty miles north is Fort Stockton on Interstate Highway 10. To the northeast and to the northwest low mountains act as bookends to the northern reaches of the Chihuahuan Desert which extends well into Mexico. To the south in the distance are the impressive Chisos Mountains in Big Bend.

With a population of 800 and an elevation of 4,000 feet, Marathon has a friendly, laid-back atmosphere. The air is clean and the sky is big and blue with puffs of snow-white clouds scattered here and there. The name, Marathon, comes from a sea captain as he was passing through the town. He remarked that it reminded him of Marathon in Greece. Marathon originated as Fort Pena (about four miles south of the town site today) that protected the "Texas & New Orleans" railroad. This railroad was absorbed into Southern Pacific that has now been absorbed into Union Pacific (big fish, little fish). The main attraction in Marathon is the Gage Hotel the centerpiece of this model.

The Gage Hotel, built by Alfred Gage, opened it doors for business in 1927. Mr. Gage died later that year and did not get to enjoy its success as a gathering place for ranchers and miners in the area. The hotel fell into disrepair over the next several decades until in 1992 when J.P. and Mary Jon Bryan began restoration. The original building, shown in the photograph below, was two stories painted yellow.

The hotel now consists of the original two-story building, an ice cream parlor to the right (I understand that it has been replaced since I was there) and dinning area to the left. To the left of the dinning area is a swimming pool and to its left is a courtyard that encircles a beautiful tree-shaded yard and garden with a fountain in the middle. One of the strong memories of that visit to Marathon in general and the Gage Hotel specifically, is standing outside the courtyard taking in the cool morning air even though it was in the middle of the summer. This was a little bit of private time while waiting for my wife to get ready for the day. Something to the west caught my eye in the distance. Beside the highway to the west is the single track mainline of the Sunset Route coming on a gentle rise after descending from Alpine, Texas. One could see off in the distance a train coming this way and it slowly grew and grew until it finally roared by on its way eastward. A little later, while my wife and I were having breakfast in the Gage Hotel dining room, another train heading in the same direction came speeding by. After breakfast, while looking around at the local tourist shops, another train came by and another then there was a lull. The trains came roaring by some time later in similar fashion but now heading west. Although this went on the whole time we were in Marathon and was possibly a nuisance to some, I thoroughly enjoyed the trains. I found myself secretly admiring the trains while pretending to show sincere interest in the local tourist stuff.

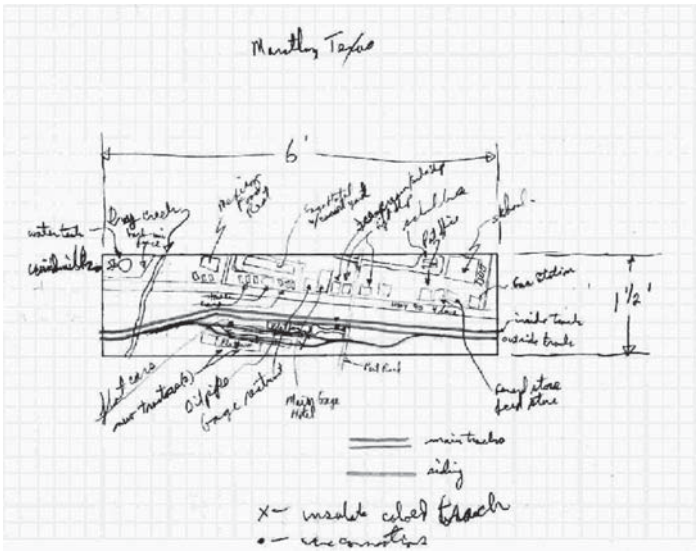
Because of Marathon's small town lure, its high desert beauty, its history and those long trains that rumbled by so often, I knew this would be my first modeling target. I had joined a local model railroad club that focused on N scale and Z scale so I decided to build a model conforming to the Z-Mod standard. This standard is similar to the N-Trak except there are only two mainline tracks and the modules are thirty-six and seventy-two inches long. These modules are only eighteen inches deep and ideal for club, show and home use.

I was at the very beginning of my modeling career (at sixty years young) and I knew I would need to brush up on the basics of sawing, hammering, nailing and making things square. I also knew that I would need to build some "stay at home" modules that would loop together the two main tracks so I could test my work. I also wanted to have some fun running. I decided to practice sawing, hammering, nailing and making things square by building a flat deck to use on saw horses for a worktable. This project went well because there were no splinters or busted thumbs. I ended up with a perfectly square deck for my worktable. One thing I did not think about was warp. The worktable looked like the rolling sand dunes of Padre Island! I gained practice but learned far more about warp than I really wanted to know. I went on to build two "endloop" modules that were not only square but also had no warp. I was now ready to begin my "for real" module, Marathon.

The first goal was to design a module that was simple enough to construct. After some research I began sketching out what I wanted on a 72"X18" module layout. The second goal was to minimize selective compression and capture this small town as best as memory and maps and photos would permit. The third goal was to differentiate the module by having some curve in the track instead of track running straight through the module. The curve dovetailed well into two sidings

Continued on Pare 16

for a bit of additional character. The sketch below was a starting point and the results stayed fairly close the original sketch.



The module consists of a frame, a deck, a perimeter strip, sub-roadbed, stacked foam and a plaster-cloth scene surface. The frame is constructed of 1" x 3" poplar strengthened with a pair of 2x2 blocks and a 1" x 3" strap is at each corner for leg support. These blocks and straps form a cavity into which the legs seat. The frame was a "glued and screwed" together using corner vices to assure square corners. As soon as it was assembled I placed the frame on the garage floor and used wood, cans of paint, water buckets and a propane bottle to make sure the frame was square and flat. I removed all the weight several hours later and started to pick the frame up but it resisted. Some of the glue dripped down and was holding the frame to the floor, but I was lucky since the bond was weak! On top of the frame is a ¼" plywood deck. As an afterthought, I "glued and screwed" ½" x ¾" strips around the perimeter of the deck to protect the stacked foam at the edges of the module from the inevitable dings that would happen during handling and running trains. From my experience with the endloops I had created, I learned that the trains were very noisy with the cork roadbed and track applied directly to foam. I used ¾" plywood for a sub-roadbed to remedy this noise and the results have worked well in this and subsequent modules. I used ¼", ½" and ¾" foam to create land contour. I decided I did not want to create exaggerated elevations that would not be representative of the immediate area around Marathon. The progress photo below shows the foam before it was shaped into smooth elevation changes.

I smoothed out the foam with a rasp and applied two layers of plaster-cloth wetted with water mixed with brown dye. This minimized the glaring white ding marks from handling and got the intended West Texas ground color. This did not give the surface I expected nor wanted so I painted the entire surface of the module with "High Desert Sand" which gave me the gritty, sandy surface that was prevalent in the Marathon area. Track cork is N scale that was striped down the middle and ballast fills the squared side of the cork and lay so that the square side was laid away from the front of the module. Ballast filled in the rest to give a correct look. Z scale track was adhered to the cork with half and half white glue and held in place with pushpins down the center of the track. Pushpins are not big but wide enough to hold down both Z scale track rails at the same time. This also permitted me to move the track slightly where better alignment was needed.

The highway, side roads and structures all have styrene foundations imbedded into the plaster-cloth surface. I made the highway slightly beveled and used some Z scale asphalt tape made by Busch. The tape has a very sticky surface so it adheres securely to any surface. I securely adhered about thirty inches (not quite a meter) to the back of my arm the first time I tried putting it on the foundation. I survived, the highway survived but I had to buy more asphalt tape!

I heard that a marker would work well to make the dashed center stripe yellow instead of the standard white stripe. When I touched the road surface, the yellow center stripe came off on my fingers. Re-applying the yellow marker and a light coat of Dullcoat solved the problem. One of my friends discovered that a paint pen also works well.

The frame and its underside were sanded, primed, sanded, primed again, sanded, painted brown, sanded and painted brown again. This might seem excessive to some but I knew that if I did the extra work I would make the module as good as I could in the area of painting and it was something I knew I could do. One benefit is that it looked better. The extra benefit is that the wood has very little exposure to humidity, which could be a source of warping, expanding and shrinking. There have had no problems with any of the modules over the last several years even though they are in the garage which alternates from a dry oven one day, to a steam bath the next day and an icemaker the day after that (Texas weather?).

For some earlier train shows 48" legs have been used to get the Z-Mod 50" standard height and for more recent shows 6" legs have been used with the whole layout placed on 2-1/2' x 6' tables. Although the higher layout setting shows off the model very well, the lower height appeals more to children and people in wheelchairs.

In the next issue, I will discuss the adventures of my first time to scratch build structures in Z scale.

Hobby Shop Corner

By Carl Lester, Owner Lester's Boxcar Works

The **"NEW" HO, HON3, O, ON30,** and **N** scale models listed below have been released or are due to be released soon. Check your local hobby shop or model train store to get a look at these outstanding models.

ATLAS: HO Scale: http://www.atlasrr.com

HO Scale Ballast Cars: *New releases of second run. Numerous road names are available.*

S P FM: Train Master with sound and Decoders have been released and should be in your local hobby shop. The sound is excellent and DCC operation is excellent, but according to my source there may be some problem operating on straight DC….

S4 Switchers: have been released. These are also excellent models…

Atlas Standard Cupola Caboose: *has been released.*

ATLAS: N SCALE: http://www.atlasrr.com/

Check the Atlas web site for locomotives and rolling stock release dates:

LIFE-LIKE HERITAGE:

Heritage 2-8-8-2: *Sound/ DCC also the loco will be released without sound or decoder December 2004.*

LIFE-LIKE P2K P1K;

P2K GP28-2 w/88"nose: *BNSF, L&N, NS, P&LE, RI, SEABOARD, SOO, CLINCHFEILD, UNDECKED December release.*

P1K RS1: *B&M, D&H, MONON, NH, EL, RI, SOO, UNDECKED December release.*

BACHMANN SPECTRUM SERIES HO, ON30:

http://www.bachmanntrains.com/

Bachmann is very mum about the future release of the HO Climax locomotive. The story I was told about the release was sometime near Christmas but they would not say which year.

BROADWAY LIMITED:

http://www.broadway-limited.com/index.html

Check the BWL web site for the new release dates for their locomotives. Also check the web site for the future locomotive models that are to be produced…

BROADWAY LIMITTED:

ATSF 4-8-4: have been released and a few are still available.

EMD NW2/SW7: due mid 2004: the new release date is sometime in early 2005.

ALCO RSD15: due December 2004: the new release date is sometime in early 2005.

USRA LIGHT 2-8-2: due to be released in 2005.

ATHEARN:

Athearn has settled the lawsuit brought by Union Pacific concerning un-authorized use of UP paint scheme. I heard that Athearn would pay, which means all of us, will have to pay for this money grab….

There are too many "new" models to list them all, so a trip to your local "train store" or favorite "hobby shop" should be on your list of important things to do. Take a friend with you to the local Hobby Shop, the trip could produce a new model railroader with which you can share this great hobby. So long for now, until next time.

Carl

Photos From Around The Region

The following photos were submitted by Bob Alston, Jr. Cen-Tex Division Director.. The photos were taken at an operation session on Jack Merkel's HO layout. Eight persons attended the operation session.

Photos by Bob Alston, Jr.

Chuck Wilson is figuring out how to get that car into that track.

Bill Beatty and Paul Otis work on solving one of the switching puzzles.

Have some photos from an operatimg session
or
progress on you club or home layout
share them with the members of
the Lone Star Region

I DIDN'T START OUT TO BE A MMR

by: Doyle Bond, MMR

In the beginning my goal was to enter some models in local contests. I wanted to see what the judges thought about my modeling. I wanted feedback so that I could improve both that model and any future models. In the early days feedback was difficult to obtain. Today, the feedback process has changed and the judges are more willing discuss their ideas about your model.

After entering numerous models at various local contests, Gene Turner suggested I enter some at a Regional Convention. His suggestion came in early June, 1995. I was member of NMRA but had not joined LSR; and I had never attended either a Region or National Convention. I decided to attend the LSR Convention to be held in Houston in mid-June. I was pleasantly surprised when one of entries won first place for on-line structures. Well, I was hooked!

I already had other structures that had earned Merit Awards, so I began to think about working on a Certificate of Achievement for Structures. I was also building some rolling stock (cars). As a result I began working on a second goal—Certificate of Achievement for Cars.

On November 10, 1997, I received my first Certificate of Achievement: MASTER BUILDER STRUCTURES. Wow! I was a Master Builder. I was so proud of myself, my chest was so puffed up that I am glad no-one stuck me with a pin. Then on March 8, 1998, I received my second Certificate of Achievement: MASTER BUILDER CARS. Double Wow! I was just as pleased with the second award as I was with the first. I had set two goals and accomplished both.

At that point I had no aspirations for further Certificates. I was pleased to have these two framed and hanging on my wall.

You ask what the point in all this is. It certainly is not to pat myself on the back (my arthritic joints will not allow such action). My point is that YOU can enjoy receiving one Certificate of Achievement without having a goal of being a Master Model Railroader. Enter some local and Region contests. Don't shy-away by saying I don't really want to be a MMR. Believe me there is a sense of accomplishment with just one Certificate of Achievement. To me, trying to read through ALL of the requirements to be MMR can be overwhelming. It was much easier for me to concentrate on one or two aspects. Try it, you may like it.

That's all for now, I gotta go play with my trains, Doyle.

I have spoken to several modelers in the region that are building models or writing articles and I bring up the achievement program and they say they are not interested in becoming a Master Model Railroader, my comment back to them is you have earned the certificate so you might as well get that little piece of paper. I took a much longer track than Doyle, I earned my first certificate back in the late 80's but didn't complete my MMR until 2002. If you will just pick up the pen and put it to paper you can have a certificate waiting for you at the next convention.

Nobody else sent me an article so I will bore you with some more photos of my Narrow Gauge Trip.

Dr. Miller's On3 layout in Oakland California. This is a very large well detailed layout. All areas of the layout are this well detailed with clutter.

A little smoke never hurt anyone. Inside the Durango roundhouse as they service #478.

Want a scratchbuilding project? The Friends of the Cumbres and Toltec Railroad have taken on several rebuilding projects over the years this is their latest.

Photos by Chuck Lind, MMR

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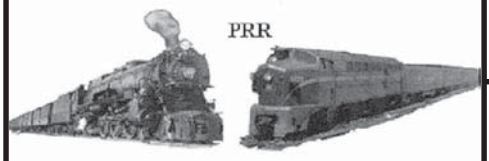
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